

## FIRST SOVIET EXPERIMENT

dealings with potential separatists were parallel to the activity of the German Consul in Tabriz, Wiistrow, who also conducted anti-Teheran propaganda in the provinces.

The latent separatist agitation gave rise, two years later, to a new outbreak in Azerbaijan. In February, 1922, the followers of the late Khiaban, calling themselves "partisans of freedom" and "enemies of despotism," rose in revolt. This time their leader was Lakhuti Khan, an officer of the Iranian gendarmerie. Lakhuti had a personal quarrel with the Governor of Azerbaijan and a professional distaste for the rival Iranian Cossacks. The loyalty record of the gendarmes in Azerbaijan was dubious, if one considers their attitude during the Khiaban revolt in 1920. Their social structure and material condition compared unfavorably with that of the traditionally proroyalist Cossacks; hence it was not difficult for their leader to stir them into open defiance of the government. The gendarmes quickly established themselves as military masters of Tabriz, arrested the Governor, and demanded that the government pay them their much-delayed salaries. They also asked for the dismissal of Reza Khan, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army. While these demands were being formulated, the leadership of the rebellion passed into the hands of the left-wing elements, organized into a "Democratic Committee." The slogans and program of the committee resembled those of Khiaban's National Democrats two years earlier, though they were, perhaps, more radical and more socialist in character. Mass meetings were held and demands for the "democratization" of the Iranian state system were made. Reza Khan, on whom the main responsibility of maintaining

order fell, refused to grant the insurgents any concessions and resolved to finish with this, as he called it, "new Khorasan." Upon his orders reinforced Cossack forces surrounded Tabriz and conquered it in February, 1922. Lakhuti Khan and a group of his aides escaped from the city, but a number of "Democrats" were either killed or imprisoned.

*Novy Vostok*, a semiofficial Soviet publication, commenting on the events in Azerbaijan, analyzed rather wistfully the reasons for the rebels' lack of success. The leadership of the revolt, it said, made a mistake in not going outside Tabriz, where it could have had the support of a gendarmerie force of three thousand, who were at that